AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of allocating switch requests within a packet switch, the method comprising:

(a) generating switch request data for each input port indicative of the output ports to which data packets are to be transmitted;

(b) processing the switch request data for each input port to generate request data for each input port-output port pairing; and

(c) generating an allocation plan by sorting the request data *R* relating to each of the input/output pairs in terms of their queue length in descending order from largest to smallest, and

(d) for each input/output pair, considered in the sorted descending order from largest to smallest, allocating as many of the requests in the queue as can be accommodated in the remaining time slots.

2. (Original) A method of packet switching wherein the packets are switched on the basis of the allocated routing, and to a packet switch in which the input port-output port routing is allocated in accordance with claim 1, and packets are switched from an input port to a specified output port in accordance with the allocated routing.

3. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, in which unallocated switch requests are reserved for use in the next phase of switch request allocation, or abandoned if they have exceeded a predetermined expiry time.

4. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, comprising a preliminary stage in which the number of requests for each input or output port is reduced by a factor such that the number of requests relating to that port is no greater than the number of available time slots.

5. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, comprising a preliminary stage in which the number of requests in respect of each input/output pair are reduced by a single common factor such that the number of requests relating to all ports is no greater than the number of available time slots.

6. (Previously Presented) A method of packet switching wherein the input port-output port routing is allocated according to the method of claim 1 and the packets are switched on the basis of the allocated routing.

7. (Previously Presented) A packet switch in which the input port-output port routing is allocated in accordance with the method of claim 1.

8. (Original) A packet switch according to claim 7, wherein packets are switched from an input port to a specified output port in accordance with the allocated routing.